

NEW LONDON COUNTY · WINDHAM · HARTFORD · MYSTIC · RHODE ISLAND

Sound Waves

Volume 14
Issue 8
May 2004

**CLUB LISTINGS
RESTAURANTS
CONCERT INFO
BAND LISTINGS
REVIEWS
& MORE**

**An
Interview
With**

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AURA

Sat. 22nd

WICKED PEACH

Fri. 28th

SUBLIME

Sat. 29th

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Fri. 30th

HARD KNOXX

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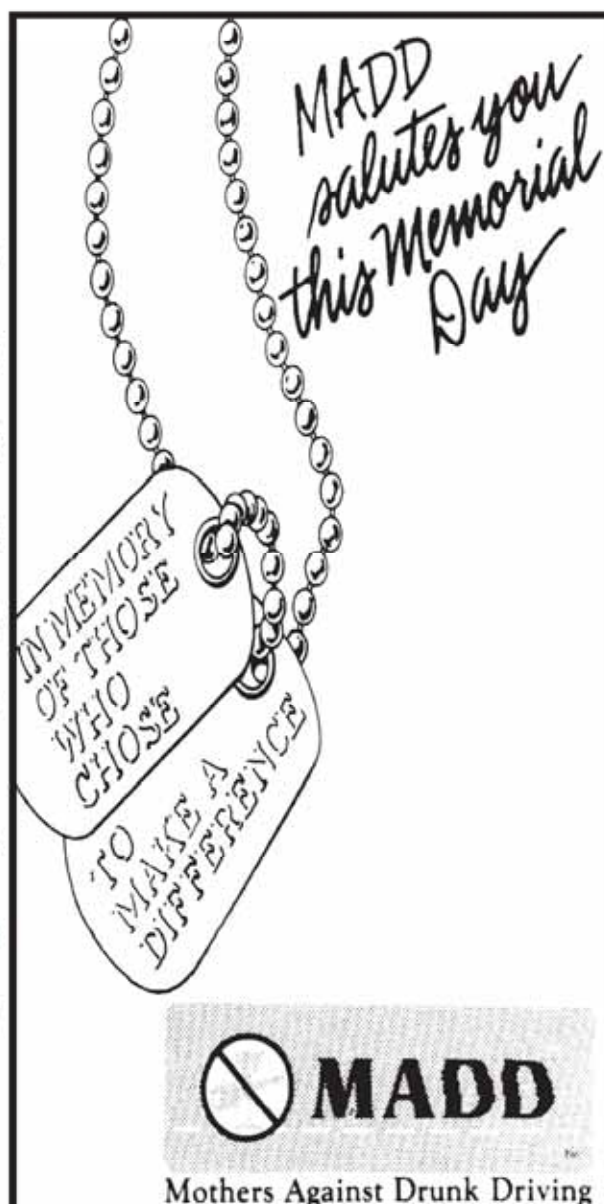


***"Let Those Who
Ride Decide!"***

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NEW LONDON, CT**

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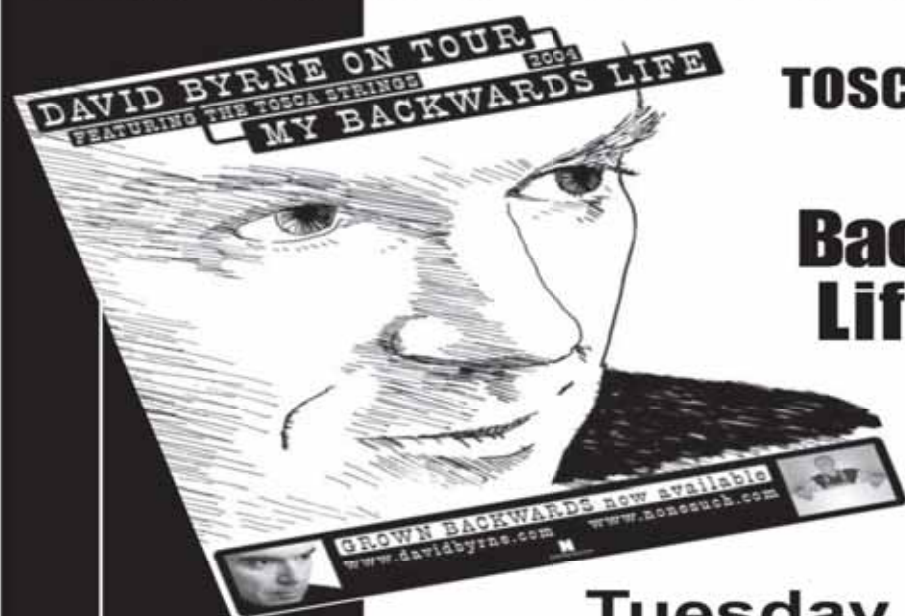
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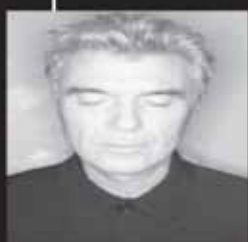
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Kevin posing with his new little brother Kyle

Sound Waves Writer
Don & his wife
Kathy Sikorski
had a baby boy on
Friday April 23rd
named
Kyle Richard
Sikorski

Make-A-Wish-Foundation POKER RUN

Sunday, May 16th

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Fri. 28th KEVIN CRANDALL BAND		¹² J	¹³ the	¹⁴ D J	¹⁵ B e v	¹⁶ D J
Sat. 22nd & 29th INSIDE OUT		¹⁹ B e v	²⁰ D J	²¹ B e v	²² INSIDE OUT	²³ D J
²⁶ B e v		²⁷ D J	²⁸ KEVIN CRANDALL BAND	²⁹ INSIDE OUT	³⁰ Band 4-8 DJ RJ 9-1	

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4-8
DJ Bev
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MUSIC NEWS BITS

David Foster and the Mohegan Sun All-Stars will perform "Beneficial Sounds," a dance cabaret to benefit **Windham Hospital**, featuring an open dance floor in Jorgensen's candlelit cabaret setting on the UCONN Campus on **Saturday, May 15th** at 8 pm. Doors will open at 7 p.m. for cabaret dinner fare and a cash bar, which patrons may enjoy throughout the show. For further information visit the Jorgensen Web site www.ct-arts.com and click on the link to the press release.

Ray Dolby was inducted into the **National Inventors Hall of Fame** May 1st in recognition of his invention of the Dolby® noise reduction system which electronically reduces the tape hiss and other noise inherent in analog audio tape recording and playback. "Ray Dolby changed the face of the recording industry with his noise reduction system. The multitrack recording techniques that blossomed in the late 1960s and early 1970s would have been impossible without Dolby's invention because the tape hiss would have been intolerable," said **Fred Allen**, head of the Selection Committee. With Dolby noise reduction, sound is passed through an encoder as it is recorded, and then played back through a decoder, dramatically lowering background noise and hiss added by the recording process with none of the side effects inherent in previous attempts at noise reduction. To qualify for this distinction, an inductee's invention must have contributed to the welfare of society and have promoted the progress of science and the useful arts. All nominations are reviewed by the National Inventors Hall of Fame Selection Committee, comprising representatives from national science and technology organizations.

Now more than ever, our world needs genuine heroes, the selfless visionaries and activists unafraid to fight the good fight despite personal consequences. On Monday, May 3, we celebrate the 85th birthday of one of our planet's most valuable citizens, musician and humanitarian **Pete Seeger**. Pete's lifelong quest to use music as a bond between all peoples and as a signpost toward social change has placed him on the ramparts of many of the sociopolitical battles of the last half-century - from union organizing and the civil rights movement to anti-war protests and environmental protection. Seeger wrote, performed and recorded pro-union songs in the non-union 1940s. In the McCarthy era of the '50s, Pete was blacklisted for his political activities. During the '60s, at the Freedom Marches in the South and he taught **Dr. Martin Luther King** an adapted version of the gospel song "We Shall Overcome," which subsequently became the anthem of the civil rights movement. Later in the decade, Pete could be found at rallies protesting the Vietnam War, which got him banned from the popular "**The Ed Sullivan Show**" on TV. In more recent years, he has turned his attention to environmental issues, helping to found the **Clearwater Environmental Foundation**, dedicated to cleaning up New York's Hudson

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Sat. 29th - **RJ the DJ**

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
DJ BARBARA	DJ BARBARA	DJ BARBARA	DJ JEN	INSIDE OUT	TBA LIVE MUSIC!	LOOSE CHANGE 4-8 KARAOKE wDJ BEV 8PM
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
DJ BARBARA	DJ BARBARA	DJ BARBARA	DJ JEN	TBA LIVE MUSIC!		Ms. MARCI BAND 4-8 KARAOKE wDJ BEV 8PM
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
DJ BARBARA	DJ BARBARA	DJ BARBARA	DJ JEN	DJ BARBARA	VICTORIA WARNE BAND	VICTORIA WARNE 4-8 KARAOKE wDJ BEV 8PM
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CONCERT DATES

CHRIS SLADE

29 - Webster Theater, Hartford, CT

DEBBIE DAVIES

14 - Catfish Grill, Warwick, RI

DEBORAH COLEMAN

21 - Chan's Woonsocket, RI

DIANE SCHUUR

7 - Odeum, E. Greenwich, RI

DAVID BYRNE

18 - Garde Arts Center, New London, CT

DUKE ROBILLARD BAND

15 - Black-Eyed Sallys, Hartford, CT

JEWEL

12 - Warner Theater, Torrington, CT

14 - Foxwoods, Mashentucket, CT

JIM WEIDER BAND

22 - Black-Eyed Sallys, Hartford, CT

JOSH KELLY

12 - Toad's Place, New Haven, CT

LEON REDBONE

7 - Cheney Hall, Manchester, CT

LIFE OF AGONY

19 - Toad's Place, New haven, CT

21 - Lupo's, Providence, RI

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

21 - Oakdale Theater, Wallingford, CT

MARCIA BALL

20 - Ocean Mist, Matunuck, RI

MARY PRANKSTER

14 - Webster Theater, hartford, CT

SMOKIN JOE KUBEK

7 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI

SUN RA ARKESTRA

23 - Birdland North, Madison, CT

38 SPECIAL

21 - Oakdale Theater, Wallingford, CT



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It is important to call as many times as you can!

It is imperative that they hear "OUR" Voice!

**Have friends, co-workers, patrons and every bar you
can think of call!**

EVERY PHONE CALL CAN HELP

Sound Waves Magazine Supports the Movement to rescind the Smoking Ban Law. We feel it is a violation of our rights as American citizens and should be decided by the voters. This Law creates an Uneven Playing field for the area businesses. And is just another "nail in the coffin" that our ELECTED officials have done to the small businesses in our state.

The ELECTED officials that have passed this law, state it is for the health of the people. But if this was their concern why do they attack the small businesses? If they had the "Backbone" to attack the source, then they would ban the sale of cigarettes in the State! So where are their priorities? Big Business or the small local entrepreneur?

We ask every reader to flood the above numbers with calls concerning this matter. Call, fax, email or mail your local ELECTED official and voice your opinion! **TODAY!**



BAD EDDIE

8 - The Oaks, E. Greenwich, RI
28 - 41 North, Mystic, CT

BOOTIE & THE COOL & EASY BAND

28 - Yacht Club, Westerly, RI 8pm

BLASTMAT

7 - American Legion, Norwich, CT

DAN STEVENS

6 - Chowder Pot IV, Hartford, CT, 7-11
7 - Perks & Corks, Westerly, RI, 8pm
8 - Public Library, Mansfield, CT, 2pm
8 - G.W. Tavern, Washington Depot, CT
13 - Three Dollar Dewey's, Portland, ME
14 - Waterfront Bar & Grill, Bangor, ME
15 - Dolphin Striker, Portsmouth, NH
21 - Maritime, Guilford, CT
22 - Sneekers, Groton, CT
26 - Red Lion, Stockbridge, MA, 8pm
28 - Sacket's, Sackets Harbor, NY
29,30 - Riverside Inn, Waterloo, NY

DARIK & THE FUNBAGS

7,8 - Club Parris, Boston, MA
15 - Thirsty Turtle, Stamford, CT
16 - Sunset Ribs, Waterford, CT 5pm-8pm
21 - Toad's Place, New Haven, CT
22 - Geraldine's, W. Springfield, MA
28 - Crazy Donkey, Farmingdale, NY
29 - The Red Door, Watertown, CT
30 - Rookies, Cromwell, CT

EIGHT TO THE BAR

7 - Town Hall, W. Hartford, CT 8:30-11:30
14 - Cache 221, New York, NY
21 - Congregation, Princeton, NJ 8pm

12 SOUND WAVES

23 - Liquid'S, Leominster, MA 7:30-11 pm
27 - The Towers, Narragansett, RI 7-10
28 - Chowder Pot, Branford, CT
31 - Capt's Cove, Bridgeport, CT 3:30-7pm

FIVE AFTER FIVE

7,8,14,15,20,21,29,30 - Intermezzo Lounge, Mashentucket, CT
28 - Ocean Beach, New London, CT

GOAT ROPERS

14,15 - Blondie's, Fall River, MA
22 - Boomer's, Groton, CT
28 - V.F.W., Taunton, MA
29 - Stinky Pete's, Westport, MA

GOPHERBROKE

7 - Doody's, N. Branford, CT
8 - Billy Wilsons, Norwich, CT
14 - Black Seal, Essex, CT
20 - Top Side, Milford, CT
21 - Mug Shots, Hamden, CT
27 - Sneekers, Ashford, CT
28 - School St. Bistro, Westfield, MA
29 - Bidwell Tavern, Coventry, CT

THE HORNETS

8 - CSDS Dance, W. Haven, CT
15 - Ultimate Billiards, Newington, CT

INNUENDO

7 - Shooters, Norwich, CT
14 - Brown derby, Uncasville, CT

INSIDE OUT

7,22,29 - Sandy's, Misquamicut, RI
14 - The Andrea, Misquamicut, RI

JOE VIC BAND

22 - Eagles Nest, Portland, CT
29 - Hangout, Moosup, CT
30 - Old Mill Tavern, Norwich, CT

JONNY LAW BAND

8 - Ivoryton Tavern, Ivoryton, CT

THE KEVIN CRANDALL BAND

8 - Daniel B's, Wakefield, RI
15,22 - The Drawbridge Inne, Mystic, CT
28 - Sandy's Lighthouse, Misquamicut, RI

KICK

8 - Crazy Donkey, Farmingdale, NY
14 - Rookies, Cromwell, CT
22 - Bourbon Street N., Hartford, CT
28 - King Neptune's, Lake George, NY
29 - 125 Riverside Drive, E. Hartford, CT

Ms. MARCI & THE LOVESICK HOUNDS

8 - Rick's Billiards, Putnam, CT
29 - C.C. O'Brien's, Pawcatuck, CT

MIKE SAVINO / THE SONS

5 - Tailgator's, Derby, CT
7 - Chowder Pot IV, Hartford, CT
8 - JRoo's, North Haven, CT
14 - Red Door, Watertown, CT
15 - Moriarty's, Colchester, CT
21 - Rio Grande, Guilford, CT
22 - Tailgator's, Derby, CT
28 - Farmington Ave, Berlin, CT
29 - Rider's Cafe, Waterbury, CT

9th WAVE

14 - Schmedley's Pub, Eagleville, CT

PANACEA

15 - Pogo Music Club, Norwich CT

STEALING PROVIDENCE

6 - Harborside, Stratford, CT
14 - Sportsbar, N. Windham, CT
20 - Bohemian Pub, Torrington, CT

33Hz

8 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT
28 - Wilson's Saloon, Norwich, CT
29 - Rick's Billiards, Putnam, CT

WICKED PEACH

14,30 - Burke's Tavern, Niantic, CT
15 - Jr's Rockhouse, Cranston, RI
21 - Sport's bar, Willimantic, CT
22 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT
29 - Paddy's, Misquamicut Beach, RI

STRAIGHT UP



For Info Call:

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- Joe Vasington
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- Barry Rudolph
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HARD
 15th - **KNOW** 

22nd - **MIND SET**

29th - **DIRTY DEEDS**

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Wed. - FREE Pool - \$1 Spag. & Meatballs

THURSDAYS - KARAOKE w/Dr Jay
\$7 Sirlion Steak

FRIDAY - Free Munchies & HH 4-8
No Cover till 10pm - PARTY w/DJ Marty

SUNDAYS - NASCAR Free Buffet
Line Dancing - 4:30
Karaoke w/ Debbie - 8pm

14 SOUND WAVES

MUSIC NOTES

By Mark T. Gould

American Music, At Its Finest

It was early 1981, and it was getting officially frustrating, at least musically. The rush of punk, such as it was, had vanished. The hair bands, amusing as they were annoying, were still a few years away, and it seemed as if popular music, at least the kind I liked, had reverted to the vast wasteland it had been for much of the previous decade.

I was living in Portland, Oregon, attending law school, at the time. Since our school library seldom got the New York Times, I had to rely on the Los Angeles Times to let me know what was going on in the current music scene.

I remember picking up one Sunday's "Calendar-Music" section, which had feature articles and listings of what bands were up and coming and who was playing where. I hadn't seen much of interest in the paper in recent months, so I figured it was just another day of mindless reviewing of very little going on.

This day's paper, though, had an article about a new band from the LA area. It said they combined the best of the rawness of the punk era with a blues-rockabilly sensibility out of the Fifties and early Sixties. It had a picture of the five members, and, my Lord, it looked like they had just walked out of Sun Records studio in Memphis with Sam Phillips, they appeared that authentic.

They were called the Blasters, and they literally changed my musical life.

A few weeks later, I was rummaging through a local record store, and I found a copy of their debut album, on Slash Records, a predominantly punk label out of Southern California. I have to admit it was the cover that caught my eye. It was a close-up painting of lead singer Phil Alvin's big wide, sweaty, contorted face, teeth bared, grimacing. On the back, color photos of the band members, including one guy leaning back on a post, smoking a cigarette. In the far lower corner, a picture of two saxophone players, including the legendary Lee Allen, who had played on the hits of Fats Domino and too many others to mention, and the fabulous Steve Berlin, who now plays with Los Lobos, another great LA band.

Judging from the cover, the Blasters seemed a little different from anyone else playing and putting out records at the time. Intrigued more than a little, I bought the record, brought it back to my apartment, and put it on the turntable. Frankly, I didn't expect much. Boy, was I wrong. It blew me away. The soulful singing of Phil Alvin; the dynamite, freight train guitar playing of his younger brother, Dave Alvin; the boogie woogie piano chops of Gene Taylor; all held down and together by the rock solid rhythm section of drummer Bill Bateman and bassist John Bazz.

But, what got to me the most was what was clearly their

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theme song, "American Music." Not jingoistic at all, just a wild celebration of everything that makes our music what it is. Country. R&B. Soul. Rockabilly. Rock and roll. And it wasn't just a song; it seemed to define the Blasters. You name it, and the Blasters could play it, and play it very, very well.

I became a major fan, collected all their music, and saw them, two years later, literally blow the doors off Portland's Euphoria Tavern with their explosive live show. The band's original lineup, with also included Allen and Berlin at the time, remained together for only a handful of years. Yet, what a time it was.

Now, some 20 years later, the original five Blasters have reformed for two American concert tours, on the East and West Coasts, as well as several European shows. A new DVD and CD, called "Going Home," recorded at the very end of the jaunt, on August 13, 2003 at the Galaxy Theatre in Santa Ana, California, captures all the greatness of one of the few bands that, two decades on, is stronger, playing and sounding better than they may have been back at that glorious beginning, if that's possible.

It was a genius move on the band's part to include both the audio, the CD, of their lives performances, as well as the video, the DVD, because this band really has to be seen to be heard. Phil Alvin, still sweating a storm just like that very first album cover, bringing out all the promise of feeling a song before he can perform it. Dave Alvin, one of the best and most underrated guitarists and songwriters in the business, prowling his side of the stage with ripcord-type intensity from his very first note to his last. Gene

Taylor's rolling piano fills, and that incredible bottom of Bateman and Bazz. And, better yet, they've included some bonus video footage on the DVD from their glory days in the early to mid 1980s, so older fans can reminiscence a bit during the reunion. In addition, some of their musical influences, Chicago blues guitarist/harp player Billy Boy Arnold, legendary rockabilly star Sonny Burgess and vocalists from the Calvanes and the Medallions, two seminal West Coast doo wop groups, come on board for the celebration of this great band's legacy.

Yet, as both the DVD and the CD show, this wasn't merely a nostalgia tour. Elementally, the Blasters still kick ass, and probably will as long as they choose to play together. There's just no way to categorize their music, other than to quote from that defining song of Dave Alvin:

"We got the Louisiana boogie and the Delta Blues. We got country swing and rockabilly, too. We got jazz, country western and Chicago blues. It's the greatest music that you ever knew. It's American music."

No matter if it's 1984 or 2004, or just about any year in between, the Blasters remain the epitome of the best of that "American Music," and it's such a pleasure to have this new DVD and CD as a treasured memento of their continuing integrity and greatness.



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THE FUTURE IS CLEAR FOR PUDDLE OF MUDD

By Rex Rutkoski

The secret? Forgive Wes Scantlin if he laughs.

The secret of Puddle Of Mudd's ability to reach people in such large numbers is simple: there is no secret.

Here's what it comes down to, suggests the band's frontman: "Our music reaches people."

Nice work if you can get it, and this quartet not only tried but succeeded in a big, big way.

Their 2001 debut album, "Come Clean," did. Boy, did it ever come clean!

Selling over five million copies, it yielded at least four radio hits: "Blurry," "Control," "Drift and Die," "She Hates Me."

"Blurry" not only was played, it became the most played track on Modern Rock Radio for 2002, earning the ASCAP award for most played song of the year.

Geffen, their record company, says the band set a record for a new rock band in selling 116,000 copies of the debut CD in its first week of release.

Now, it's onward and upward to, quips Scantlin, "the edge of existence to meet interesting other species and get to know their culture better so we can all come together as one entity in peace and rebellion."

Surprised at the success so far?

"It is always very surprising to get together out in the planet and play rock that we wrote," he says. "The only thing I ever loved is music. It doesn't leave me on the beach in Mexico in a beautiful sunset alone."

It doesn't matter what's behind the name here, but the people behind the name. "We're all kinds of different people living for one cause, offering emotions that are something very wonderful and enjoyable to other people, filling a void for truly passionate music for all kinds of listeners," he says.

Besides Scantlin on vocals and guitar, there's Paul Phillips, guitar; Douglas Ardito, bass; and Greg Upchurch, drums.

"Every single member of this band has the biggest hearts in the world. None of us ever want to stop making magical music. It's our dream," Scantlin says.

Now that dream turns to "Life On Display," Puddle of Mudd's new CD. The band, Michael "Elvis" Baskette and "Come Clean's" John Kurzweg produced it. "We all worked very hard. There's always good times, there's always tough times when you are writing about subjects and other emotions. It is and was a very vigorous time to deal with, but it is and always will be Puddle of Mudd."

Scantlin says the new CD represents total growth and musical experiences "jammed together for one purpose: rock'n'roll."

It takes time just like anything else, but it is more fun than ever to create music, he says. "It's a very magical time. A lot of magical moments happen in the middle of the night."

The word from fans has been enthusiastic, he reports. "All of the fans have been telling me on a daily basis that they like the new record better than 'Come Clean.' But they're really both just great albums and the third record will probably be better than all of them."

The group wanted "Come Clean" to sound like it sounds live, while keeping it basic with a minimum of overdubs. The result, they say is a bigger, rawer, sound.

Scantlin says he has kept his approach to songwriting. The group is drawn to a variety of subject matter, he says, including rebellion, love, aggression, passion, fear, sex, mental frustration, peace, harmony and a general expression of emotions "that excites your senses."

He says he continues to be motivated by his "inner demons and aggressions" that he has got to get out and onto tape. "I love to share my emotions with people. It helps me out and makes me feel amazing. And I think other people get the same feeling."

The artist says music has been a part of his life since before he was born. "My dad played rock records while I was developing inside my mother. So it's been in my life forever and I thank God everyday for music being a major part of my life."

The music scene offers many different doors, Scantlin adds. "It's always very diverse and interesting," he says.

Puddle of Mudd seems to be accepted into a lot of different people's lives, Scantlin says, and that's a wonderful feeling. "But I'm really not trying to fit in to any scene. Desperation is very unattractive."

Quite attractive to the members of Puddle of Mudd is the concert stage. "People should expect something surprising. You never know what might just happen at any rock

show," he says. "It's always very interesting and most likely crazy and fun. Everyone can just let go and enjoy life."

The beauty of live, he says, is "people having one experience together, letting out their inner emotions and just getting loose."

He loves the challenge of performing at the best of his ability even if he is tired or sick or something is bothering him. "I just go out and rock because that's what I love to do."

He says he learns from everyone with whom he works. "You take a piece of all the different artists that you tour with and you learn from all experiences in your life," he says. "It's always fun to watch interesting and other gifted musicians play together."

And it's fun relationship for Puddle of Mudd and its fans. "We have so many extraordinary and lovely fans, there is no limit on age or race, and we love each and every one of them for all their love and dedication."

"Our fans are the best. They give us gifts, come to our shows, have a great time and I think they're very passionate people. It's kind of like a big and diverse relationship."

What does he want people to take from the band's music?

"That love and light can save you from anything you experience in your journey through life," he replies



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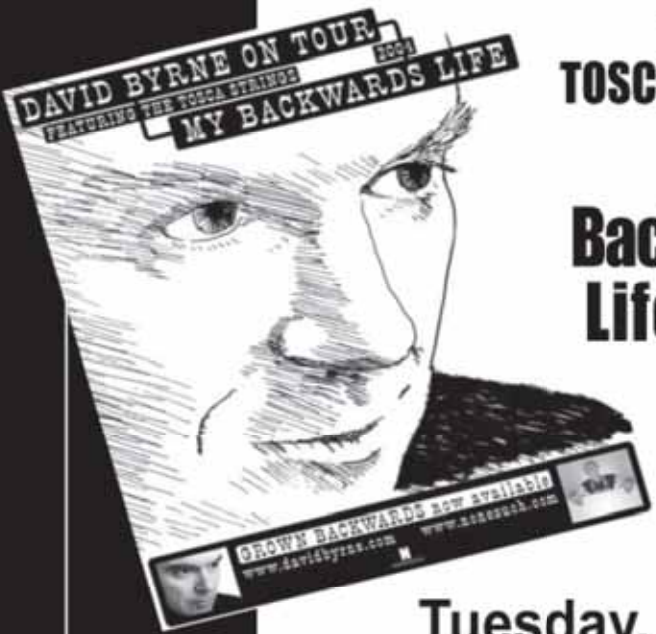
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HEARING AID

THE CASUALTIES

"On The Front Line"

SideOneDummy Records

It has become a rarity for most punk bands to make a new record that is actually better than the one preceding it. I've seen band after band start incorporating more pop/emo, or reggae influenced music into their own for the sake of "progression". However, The Casualties have returned faster, angrier, and more hardcore than ever before, and for The Casualties, that's saying a lot.

The first thing you notice as soon as "On The Front Line" starts playing, is that the instrumentation is much better than anything they've ever done before. Guitar, bass, drums, and vocals are all in time with each other, and it creates a tight, professional sound that you'd never expect from The Casualties. It also seems that their new lineup is able to play a lot faster than before, which adds a lot of intense energy and passion to the record.

The fast, driving bass line in "Casualties Army" gets you pumped up immediately, and the rest of the album doesn't let you down. I was surprised, even impressed with some of the solo's on the CD, and even more so with the harmony in the beginning of "Unknown Soldier." The new improvements with the musicianship, coupled with the frequent chants and sing-alongs, just make you want to move. I'll even admit to being prompted to a one-man circle pit the first few times I listened to it. This CD is also much better than their last release, "Diehards," and although there is a certain sound I love about the old Casualties records, most of the changes on this one are for the better, and still hold true to the band's original sound.

I'm not big on album introductions, but "Casualties Army," with it's military marching, and blaring sirens, sends a clear message about the rest of the CD. The Casualties seem to have shed their identity as being nothing more than self-proclaimed "drunk punx", to take on some hotly debated political topics. This is an album that draws it's energy from the world around it, dealing with issues like the war on Iraq, urban poverty, drug abuse, the media, and America's class system. Singer, Jorge's voice has transformed from a gritty crust-punk yell, to something more like the raging bark of a pit bull. And when he

screams, "Joey please come back home now" towards the end of "Unknown Soldier," you are almost moved to tears. All this from a band who a few years ago said "f*ck politicians" to punks who stood behind political issues. And while most of the songs are politically concerned, "Tragedy" mourns the death of a friend who passed too soon, and "Tomorrow Belongs To Us" is a hopeful anthem for the youth of today. Although "For The Punx" will probably always be my favorite Casualties album, this is a great record dealing with issues that concern everyone in this country, and if you're looking for a new punk release that won't disappoint, I definitely recommend buying this CD.

- Wyatt Shibley

SCOTT HOLT

"Chipped Front Tooth"

Gracetone Records /
Lightyear Entertainment

I would imagine that it takes more than just being an everyday, run of the mill guitar player to land a job playing alongside the legendary Buddy Guy. That being said, there's a 32 year old guitarist from Columbia, Tennessee by the name of Scott Holt that has something special in terms of musical ability. And since 1989, he has also possessed that very job as Buddy Guy's right hand man.

After working a few years with Buddy, Holt formed his own band, playing a broad range of contemporary and Chicago style blues when he wasn't on the road with Guy. His band's 1998 debut effort, "Messing With The Kid", introduced Holt to a new audience of blues fans. Holt's sophomore effort, "Dark Of The Night", featured special guest appearances from Buddy himself, as well as the likes of Mitch Mitchell and Billy Cox from the Jimi Hendrix Experience and Tommy Shannon, Chris Layton, and Reese Wynans from Double Trouble. With guests of that caliber, it was clear that Scott Holt had become the real deal. His third solo effort, "Angels In Exile", further established Holt as a rising talent on the blues scene; an expressive guitarist and soulful singer who can tastefully blend blues standards with his own refreshing, original material.

Now the Scott Holt Band has released "Chipped Front Tooth" on Gracetone Records (Lightyear Entertainment). Self-

admittedly a rough, unpolished recording effort, the music on "Chipped" is never-the-less expressive and honest. The opening track, Holt's cover of the Howlin' Wolf penned "Rockin' Daddy", delivers with a barroom feel and pure guitar sound that sets the tone for the recording. Holt's original material provides the perfect compliment, with tracks like "Tick" and "If I Could" offering a seamless transition between blues standards from Bobby "Blue" Bland ("You'd Be A Millionaire") or Willie Mabon ("I Don't Know"). Holt has always done an admiral job shifting gears between uptempo rockers and soulful ballads, and his work on "Chipped Front Tooth" continue on that same trend. Tab Benoit also lends a hand with some great pedal steel guitar and accordion work, as well as mixing down the final project.

Holt's spontaneous approach on "Chipped" was unique in the fact that the band opted to tour with the new material prior to recording. The entire disc was recorded in a single day, with most of the tracks possessing an improvisational feel and realness that is often lost in the production line. Holt points out that the material here "is like a woman with a chipped front tooth; the realness just accentuates her natural beauty". After a quick glance at the cover art, I'm not sure I would agree, but after a few listens to "Chipped Front Tooth", you begin to believe that Scott Holt knows what he is talking about ("sometimes it's the little imperfections that make something more beautiful"). And the Scott Holt band clearly has something to say here.

- Don Sikorski

DROPBOX

"Dropbox"

Universal/Motown Records

Maddening. That's how I'll describe my efforts to review Dropbox's debut CD. Why was it a maddening experience? Well, I'll get to that in a moment, ok? First, I should explain that I do the bulk of my music listening within the confines of my ratty old Jeep pickup. I have a stereo in there that is capable of causing a brain hemorrhage, and besides that, everyone knows that heavy metal always sounds better when you are rolling. So that's my favorite place to reflect upon the qualities of a piece of music, and more often than not it's there in my old truck that I ultimately decide whether a new al-

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bum sucks, or does not suck (the key to any good music review).

Now, my copy of "Dropbox" was one of those "Advance Promo - Not For Resale" packages; no artwork included unfortunately, but there was a nice picture of the band and some cool info sheets. Ok, so, they looked like they might be some deranged, pissed off musicians, but were they really any different than the forty-seven million other bands trying to make a name for themselves out there? I mean... could they move me? My old red truck swallowed their CD hungrily, and my ridiculously oversized speakers began pummeling me with "Wishbone", the leadoff track. "Hey, not bad, I can crank this stuff," I thought. I turned it up louder, and my right front speaker grill blew off and landed on the floor of my old Jeep. Perfect... I was now achieving full saturation!

But here's where it got a little crazy. While the volume knob was certainly working fine, the track select button seemed to have some kind of voodoo curse on it - I couldn't change songs in either direction! The only way to get through the damn CD was to start at the beginning and let it play through in its entirety! I could not believe it; I tried everything - even pounding on the dashboard - but, to borrow a phrase from Led Zeppelin, the song remained the same. Now,

I have a 25-minute ride to work, and a 25-minute ride home. If you do a bit of quick math, you will realize that after a few days with Dropbox, I was supremely qualified to review the first five songs of the CD!

Haha, luckily for me there was some damn fine music on there even if I couldn't change tracks. The second tune, "I Feel Fine" kinda has an Alice In Chains vibe to it, with maybe a little Godsmack and Staind influence swishing around in there too. Not really my cup of tea, but I had to wait for it to finish because, well, you know, the button thing again. It was a bit of a letdown after the opening ferocity of "Wishbone" and its heavy riffing. I don't hate it, but I do hate Alice In Chains, always did, always will! Uh-oh, I can hear the AIC fans marching upon Sound Waves headquarters....

I was interested to read in the promo sheets that accompanied the disc that Lee Richards, Dropbox's guitarist and evil mastermind, was actually the original guitarist for Godsmack. Now, everyone knows how hugely successful Godsmack has become. So why did Lee part ways with them just before they hit the lottery? Something about babies and settling down, but apparently retirement didn't sit too well with Richards, or with his former bandmates, who appear to have had a

huge hand in his return to arena rock. And, he has made the most of the opportunity, hooking up through the Godsmack connection with John Kosko (vocals), Joe Wilkinson (co-guitarist), James Preziosa (bass), and Bob Jenkins (drums) to put together an album so powerful that even Godsmack themselves must be kinda scratching their heads.

Anyway, back to the disc review! Things totally get cooking with "Nowhere Man", the album's third selection. Gone is the dreary atmosphere of "I Feel Fine", and the bass player puts out an intro lick that warns you you're about to be blasted. At first, I thought it was going to be a cover of the old Beatles' classic, but it isn't; it's a down tuned rocker with a great chorus and a smoking guitar solo that lets the cat out of the bag: Dropbox really is going to be a big time band. As great as "Nowhere Man" is, though, "End Of Days" is even better. A riff you can sink your teeth into and a hook that gets you singing at the top of your lungs make this the best song on the album. Oh yeah, absolutely the best song on the album.

Eventually, I did figure out that I could change tracks in other cd players (just not my super-duper Pioneer deck for some peculiar reason), and I did finally manage to check out the rest of the al-



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bum. You know, underneath all the crap you see on MTV, and all of the poop you hear on commercial radio, there are still a few bands carrying the oldschool metal torch, and I have a good feeling that Dropbox is one of them. Their music is built around the guitar riffs, and that formula rarely steers you wrong if you throw in a little sincerity. On this album, all the corners are touched. You get quiet, you get heavy, and you get all that falls in between. And if you're lucky, you'll be able to change tracks!



- R. A. Dion

WIDESPREAD PANIC

"Night of Joy"

Sanctuary

Widespread Panic is taking 2004 off so a live CD is a welcome addition to any Panic fan's collection. The nine tracks on this CD were recorded over two nights in November 2003 at the House of Blues in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and represent selections from the early years (late 1980's) to the 2003 studio release, "Ball." Five of the nine tracks do not appear on any other official Panic releases, making this CD a must for dedicated Panic fans and a great introduction for new listeners. The CD is appropriately named: the band has a joyous sound, led by John Bell's big raspy honky-tonk voice.

One of the really fun things about jam bands is the eclectic choice of covers and this CD has three great ones; Bill Withers 1973 classic "Use Me," gets the Dirty Dozen Brass Band on stage, Stevie Wonder's "I Wish," and a familiar tune for Panic fans "Arleen." "Arleen" is a standout track for me. Written by reggae producer Winston Riley, the song has been in the Panic repertoire since 1987 and has only been performed 133 times over the last 16 years. This is the story of a day gone bad. It starts out pretty well, "Woke up this morning about 10:15, Six-pack of stout and a stick of sensei," then deteriorates quickly. Naked sixteen year olds, no electricity, Dad's got a gun — you really have to hear this song.

The Dirty Dozen Brass Band has appeared with Widespread Panic many times, with the 2000 live release "Another Joyous Occasion" recorded during their 1999 tour. The two bands sound great together, jamming out for over 17 minutes on the last track, "Rebirth," from 1997's "Bombs and Butterflies."

Yet, somehow, this CD doesn't capture

the essence of a Panic show. There is not much crowd noise, which makes for a nice clean recording but lacks the excitement you usually get from a live recording. Panic allows taping at their shows and there is a great raw quality to the resulting CD's that makes it seem like you were there. This CD is a little too slick. Then there's the length. It seems like just as everyone gets warmed up, it's over. Considering that most Panic shows clock in at around 3 hours, this CD is more of an appetizer than a main course. I shouldn't be complaining about a solid 78 minutes of music, but, hey, I'm an American, and size matters. Just for the heck of it I checked the set lists for the Myrtle Beach shows and the band played 45 songs over two nights with only 3 songs repeated. Perhaps we'll be seeing Night of Joy Volume II sometime in the future?

Great song selection, great collaboration between Panic and DDBB, but when it comes to live Panic, super-size me.



- Elena Demeris

1/2

ED BURLESON

"The Cold Hard Truth"

Palo Duro Records

From the fiddle introduction of the opening track, "Honky Tonk Heart," it's clear that Ed Burleson's new album is about as real country as it gets. No, not Nashville country, but honky tonk country, full of all the promise and all the confession of real, honest to God, traditional people music. It's just about as good as it gets.

On "Cold Heart Truth," Burleson, a former rodeo cowboy, a direct descendant of the first vice president of the Republic of Texas and protégée of the late Doug Sahm, writes and sings torch ballads, country icon tributes (check out "All Bucked Up," which virtually channels all the best of Buck Owens, the original honky tonk legend, complete with the instrumental bridge of his classic "Buckaroo") and just plain good old boy, confessional songs, all brought about in a clear, no frills singing style that mere pseudo-Nashville pretenders could do well listening to and learning from.

There is a quite welcome purely and clarity to Ed Burleson's music, something that is sorely lacking today in what passes for "contemporary country." Yet, ironically, Ed Burleson's "Cold Heart Truth" is about as contemporary, as today, as just about anything that happens in real life.



- Mark T. Gould

1/2

CANDI STATON

"Candi Staton"

Astralwerks

BONNIE BRAMLETT

*"It's Time/Lady's
Choice"*

Raven Records

Back in the heyday of Sixties soul, most fans knew about Detroit's Motown and Memphis' Stax Records, but only those who got deeply into the music learned about the final piece of that musical triangle, the street tough R&B emanating from Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Because Muscle Shoals never got the comparative publicity or popularity of the other two, more well known recording companies, some important artists got a bit left behind in the wake of the popularity and recorded output of the more popular singers like Aretha Franklin, Carla Thomas and others who made their mark in Motor City and Memphis. Thankfully, these two re-releases bring two of the best, and most certainly underrated, singers of that era back in front of their fans.

Staton recorded a number of singles and albums for the long defunct Fame Records, based in Muscle Shoals. As this release, which pulls together 26 of her gems, richly shows, she was one of the most solid sounding, soulful singers of that era. Recorded and produced by noted Muscle Shoals board man Rick Hall, these tracks can, and do, stand up strongly next to the more popular tracks recorded there by stars like Franklin, Wilson Pickett and others.

While Staton's all too brief career remained in the comparative shadows of soul music, the same can't be said for Bramlett. In the late 60s, before these recordings were made, she was one half of the driving force behind Delaney, Bonnie & Friends, a loose amalgam of singers and players who went on to further fame with Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs & Englishmen and Eric Clapton's Derek & The Dominos.

Ironically, while many of Delaney and her sidemen became even more famous with their projects after Friends broke up, Bramlett made a musical decision to return to her southern roots, and recorded these two albums for the Macon-based Capricorn Records. Buoyed by a crack group of studio

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musicians from the Muscle Shoals area, who rivaled those in Memphis, Detroit and just about everywhere else, and a slew of impressive, well, friends, as guests, including Gregg Allman, Dickey Betts, Jaimoe and Butch Trucks from the Allman Brothers Band, Bramlett produced two eclectic and soulful records.

They may not have had the name appeal of some more popular artists of their day, but, as these two fine recordings show, Candi Staton and Bonnie Bramlett were, in their own way, just as powerful singers and performers as anyone who set foot in those studios in those days.

- Mark T. Gould

Both: ****

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of Music City's best kept mini-secrets, its vast history of rhythm and blues music.

Coupled with the Country Music Hall of Fame's current exhibit on this city's "other music," these recordings are a startling work, drawn from some 20 plus record labels, including a number of major hits that even the most casual fan will know, as well as several rarities that are testimony to this important style and genre.

Among the hits are Ruth Brown's "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean," Bobby Hebb's "Sunny," and The Prisonaires "Just Walkin' in the Rain." But, the beauty and detail of this vast collection are in the other included gems, including Hank Crawford's "Christine," Esquerita's "Rockin' The Joint," and The Avons' "Since I Met You Baby," among many, many others.

It goes without saying that Nashville was, is and will probably always be, the Mecca of country music. Yet, as this splendid package and exhibit shows, there's a lot of soul there, too.

1/2 - Mark T. Gould



ERIC CLAPTON

"Me and Mr. Johnson"

Reprise/Duck Records

Say what you want about Eric Clapton's studio recordings over the years, but when he embraces his first love, the blues, the results are fire-cracker red hot. In this, his full band interpretations of the relatively short catalog of one of his heroes, the mystical Robert Johnson, he sounds as energetic, possessed, and engaged as he did on "From the Cradle," his last blues-based solo album of almost a decade ago.

Suffice it to say that, if you liked "Cradle," you will love this release. Eschewing the traditional acoustic renditions of Johnson's songs, Clapton instead brings out somewhat different arrangements of the material, with his band, consisting of Any Fairweather Low/guitar, Doyle Bramhall II/guitar, Billy Preston/keyboards, Jerry Portnoy/harmonica, Nathan East/bass and Steve Gadd/drums, to create electric, and electrifying, versions of these classics. By that method, he's able to both pay homage to the originals and, in a way, modernize them without losing their soul (no pun intended, Mr. Johnson!). On each

song, Clapton sings and plays like his life depends on it, and it makes for breathtaking performances that easily rank with the best of his long career.

This is a masterwork, by a master musician, and I'm sure that it would make Robert Johnson proud to hear it.

1/2 - Mark T. Gould

***** Excellent

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PERSPECTIVES

"How's Your Career Focus?"

by Kenny Love

Recently, I was reviewing several music news articles that were citing and championing the myriad of advantages unsigned and independent recording artists now have. The angle was, largely, based on the fact that major labels have, for the most part, lost what was once seemingly an eternal stronghold on the music industry.

Ironically, the articles' points of referenced artists were "name" artists who had once been signed to major record labels and had, subsequently, been 'relieved of their duties', so to speak, or "name" artists who had finally decided and acted upon their decisions that being on their own, and without the attached coat strings of a major label, were far better.

Ironically, the only truly independent recording artist who was mentioned in the articles, and who has national notoriety, is Ani DiFranco. And, unless memory or oversight evades me, Ani is one of the few, if not the only true unsigned/independent artist who has focused, both online and offline, successfully at a national level.

Such artists as Prince and Madonna don't count because they were, initially, major label babies who later used their earnings to begin their own labels. No, I'm talking "down-in-the-trenches-from-day-one" recording artists who still maintain their independence, and very successfully. And, prior to the Internet, I might add.

Having represented many unsigned and independent recording artists as a record promoter and media publicist (I've even represented former major label artists), a common trait that I find is that few artists have a specific 'game plan'. There is no actual, nor even an implied focus, with promotion ideas being general in nature, at best.

For example, most recording artists understand that their release, eventually, requires some degree of radio airplay in order to be competitive. However, due to a lack of time (or laziness) in compiling appropriate radio stations for their music, or the lack of funds to get their music to the stations (another example of ineffective planning), they lose stations that could be significantly beneficial to their careers.

Yet, another problem is that most artists don't focus deeply enough on or take advantage of the numerous sub-formats and crossover genres that are at their disposal today. For example, a particular Progressive Rock tune just may sound "jazzy" enough to make it on some Jazz radio stations. Or, a Blues song may be able to crossover to a Jazz or Country radio station, depending on its content.

I have also noticed that most unsigned and independent artists place little, if any priority on having a video produced of, at least, their first single. Not only would this serve to separate them from, and place them a level above their competition, but the video exposure, in conjunction with radio airplay could produce incredible results, both in

notoriety and financially.

And, again, a video doesn't need to be elaborate or expensive. One example on how to do it cheaply is Jeffrey Fisher's article at <http://www.mubiz.com/JPF-Art.html>.

Artists should understand that, for the first time in the history of the commercial music industry, they have the ultimate advantage ever. Hence, they should also understand that whether radio, print media, video, live performance, or otherwise, the weakest link of their marketing campaigns can gradually chip away and, ultimately, destroy a career...very much like a cold that can turn into influenza or pneumonia if not treated in its earliest stage.

The advantage that artists coming from major record labels have, is that they have witnessed, whether firsthand or secondhand, on a daily basis, the people behind their scenes who made their success. Even if these particular artists had little success, they still had the advantage of being "business educated" to some degree, even by default.

Therefore, unsigned and independent artists, who have never had the advantage of watching their success being churned out by a label, whether major or independent, will need to discipline themselves on the art of "focusing" for maximum effectiveness.

This is an all important, across-the-board requirement that should be applied to all aspects of their careers...the art aspect, as well as the business and financial aspects.

So, how's your career focus today?

Editor's Note: Kenny Love is president of MuBiz.com, a marketing, promotion and services firm for recording artists. He is also Chief Operating Officer and Director of Marketing for JeKeRe Records, which releases NCD (www.newchosendisciples.com) this summer.



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